

## Accountability and school obligation: a case study of society's expectations of the schools curriculum in Zimbabwe<sup>1</sup>

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The expectations of society on the contribution of the school, through its curriculum, to social development and the justification for such expectations *vis-a-vis* the availability of the prerequisites for the proper implementation of the curriculum are examined. Professional expertise, financial and material resources and decision-making power are argued to be fundamental prerequisites for accountability. The article reports on the findings of a mini-study carried out in Harare, Zimbabwe, on the expectations of the parents and teachers on the role of the school and its accountability to various stakeholders. It was concluded that there are serious constraints which make it difficult for schools to carry out their operations as intended. It is argued that these constraints have to be taken into consideration when schools are criticised for failing to meet their expected goals. The authors' observations on the Zimbabwe school curriculum are discussed and suggestions on how it could be made more relevant to the needs of the society are presented.

### Introduction

The school occupies young people as learners for most of their prime time at great expense to both their families and the state. Apart from the direct costs of labour and material resources, there is a large range of opportunity costs incurred with respect to the learners, the teachers and the buildings that are used for schooling. Whether or not this is a worthwhile expenditure is not a subject for debate among both the developed and the developing nations to-day; the thrust is in fact towards Education for All. In making these investments, there are certain benefits societies expect to gain from the school. Through its curriculum, the school is expected to cultivate in the learners certain knowledge, skills, potentials and attitudes which will enable them to confer the expected benefits to society. If the school fails to deliver these expectations, to what extent is it accountable to the stakeholders? Is the school adequately equipped to deliver? The focus in this article is on the extent to which the school should be held accountable for its curriculum failing to produce these expectations of the society on the learners. A mini-study, carried out in Harare, is used to throw light on some of these issues.

### Theoretical Framework

#### What is Accountability?

Lawton (1983:90) says:

Accountability is concerned with responsibility and acknowledging the responsibility in some public form ... To account is to demonstrate success or acknowledge failure in some way which is publicly meaningful.

Mehrens and Lehmann (1984:256) argue that:

Accountability includes: setting correct goals, evaluating their degree of achievement ... and what prices, presenting this information to the public and accepting responsibility for any results that are perceived as inadequate.

It follows then that correct goals have to be set for the school and their achievement accurately measured to enable whoever is accountable for the outcome of the school to do so. Identification of indisputable goals of the school and the accurate measurement of their degree of achievement are not easy tasks. However, it is still expected that the school account for its activities in some satisfactory manner.

#### Justification for school accountability

Accountability is often associated with business concerns where, because resources are invested and ideal conditions for production are to a large extent provided, a firm has to produce as expected, or be held responsible for failure to meet the expected production targets. The *raison d'être* of any school is the education of the learners. This is difficult to quantify in order to evaluate the school in the manner a business is evaluated. However, there are many aspects of the school,

which resemble those of a business to the extent that its stakeholders may justifiably expect a certain amount of accountability just as is expected of a business. One such aspect is investment. In the school, like in any business, money is invested. In the Financial Budget of July 1997 to December 1998, Zimbabwe allocated Z\$112 billion to Primary and Secondary Education, and Z\$2.819 billion to Higher Education, the two together taking 30% of the National Budget (The Herald, 25 July). Developing countries look at education as a vehicle for national development and invest large sums of money in their education systems. They naturally expect to see their investments yielding the expected fruits.

Further, the education system employs people as teachers, clerks, grounds persons and cooks. Teachers alone constitute the majority of all public service employees in Zimbabwe. Some of the teachers and lecturers are so highly skilled that they could be doing some other highly productive work if they were not confined to the classroom. It is clear then that the state is investing in education and like any other investor, should expect accountability for the management of the investment.

Today, many societies are experiencing such destabilising factors as the deteriorating economic situation, the growth of consumerism and the loss of confidence in some schools due to strikes, riots and abuse of female students by some unscrupulous teachers. These factors have increased society's demand for accountability by the school system. For example, British history tells us of the William Tyndale Primary School scandal where teachers were found to preach politics, neglecting the basic skills (Gordon, 1981). Such cases have strengthened the call for some accountability from the school.

#### Prerequisites for accountability

From a theoretical standpoint, for an institution to be held accountable for the processes and products of the system for which it is set, certain pre-requisites for accountability have to be in place (Gordon, 1981). The need for clear goals and the precise measurement of their attainment has already been mentioned. The article now looks at professional expertise, financial and material resources, decision-making power, and consensus on the nature, degree, and worthwhileness of the attainments both as expected, and as realised.

#### Professional expertise

With a relevant curriculum in place, all other factors being provided, professionally qualified teachers should be expected to produce, from the school, citizens who meet the societal expectations. The products of the school should have the knowledge, skills, attitude and potential for the necessary training to enable them to take up jobs or create jobs through which they will contribute significantly to the socio-political scene. Beeby (in Hawes, 1979:19) advances the hypothesis that "...

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teachers' competence, flexibility and ability to innovate depend largely on their level of education and training".

This suggests that a properly trained teacher, given the necessary pre-requisites, and working with normal learners, should be expected to produce acceptable results and well-disciplined citizens.

In Zimbabwe, however, the schools are not generously blessed with qualified personnel. The Report of the Secretary for the Ministry of Education (1985) revealed that there were 30% untrained teachers in the secondary school sector, and 44.4% in the primary school sector. If such a high percentage of the teachers are teaching with no training to do the job (except that they were also taught as pupils during their time) then blaming the school for poor outcomes would be as illogical as expecting a man who has had a leg amputation, and no training in surgery, to perform similar operations on other patients, just because he once experienced it performed on himself; the mortality rate would be high! The problem with the school is that the mortalities are not immediately evident, but show up much later, long after people have forgotten the root cause of the problem. Children fail O-level maths, or develop poor attitudes to manual work — when they are still in the primary school; years before sitting for their O-level examinations. One of the main reasons is their exposure to unqualified teachers handling an otherwise well-intended curriculum. When the schools are fully staffed with professionally qualified personnel, we can then justifiably expect them to take the blame for any poor outcomes.

#### Financial and material resources

Apart from human resources, effective curriculum implementation requires adequate financial and material resources. The extract below, quoted from Hawes (1979:19) reporting his 1972 conversation with a distressed teacher in West Africa (whom he calls an optimist), may help to illustrate this point:

- Optimist: We're introducing New Mathematics into our primary schools. We hope to develop a spirit of active enquiry in children and to replace rote memorisation.
- Hawes: What are your average enrolments?
- Optimist: Very high. Many classes have eighty children to a single teacher. Classrooms are often packed full.
- Hawes: What is your equipment position?
- Optimist: Very sad. We lack furniture and essential books. There is no apparatus and little material to make it out of.
- Hawes: In these conditions are activity methods possible?
- Optimist: Hardly possible.

Surely how can a school implement its curricular intentions in such cases? And if it cannot, how can it be blamed for poor outcomes? Lack of financial and material resources remains the rule rather than the exception in most developing countries (Bockarie, 1992).

In the study, many respondents cited lack of financial and material resources as limiting the teacher to do his/her professional work properly, hence holding the providers of resources accountable for the poor outcomes in the school.

#### Decision-making power

For the school to be accountable for the quality of its products, it must have decision-making power on such issues as the curriculum, deployment and utilisation of resources. Do our schools have this power? Obanya (1987) observed three levels of elaboration of educational intention before the school and the teacher have any say on what should be taught for what purposes.

The first level is at the political ideological level where "empty" slogans such as 'Education for Self-reliance'; 'Education with Production' and 'Education for Poverty Eradication' are given. (They are empty with respect to guidance for objectives and content). These slogans have to be analysed and translated into broad goals at the second level by curriculum developers at such centres as Zimbabwe's

Curriculum Development Unit. It is from this second level of elaboration that syllabus objectives and content are derived. By the time the teacher translates these goals into his/her lesson objectives and content, there may already have been much distortion of the initial intentions. Any failure of the school to meet the initial intentions of the politicians may be seen as a result of the inaccurate interpretation of their pronouncements down the line and therefore a collective responsibility of all the authors of the school curriculum. Further to this, the school has to work within the 'straight jackets' of grade/form levels, school terms, subject combinations, subject weekly hours, etc. All these place serious constraints on the teacher's freedom to manoeuvre and influence outcomes. One does not despise the importance of the decisions made by the teacher with respect to sequencing the work, choosing specific content, examples and methodology, for these are fundamental to the realisation of the goals of any curriculum no matter how fool-proof. However, by the time these decisions are made, the whole scenario is already a straight jacket.

#### Consensus on worthwhile attainments

Although people agree on the need to send their children to school, there is little consensus on what constitutes the most worthwhile knowledge and skills for the learners in any society. Even where the worthwhile goals of the school may be spelt out, there is also little consensus on how these can best be measured. In Zimbabwe, the examinations are far from measuring the learners' attainment of the acclaimed worthwhile goals of patriotism, entrepreneurship, technological skills, etc. (Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), 1980). Instead they measure other book knowledge and mental skills which most students are not likely to use in their rural lives. Teachers are left with no option but to teach these same aspects to ensure that their pupils pass the examinations. When students compete to enter the medical school, for example, a high pass in the A-level Biology paper is regarded as a better estimate of potential for a surgeon than any such qualities as patience, perseverance and manual dexterity. What happens is that a teacher may give his/her pupils certain very useful skills and qualities, but if these cannot be reflected in the examinations, the teacher may be condemned as having done nothing. It is not easy to quantify the degree of contribution or uselessness of the school curriculum on the product that school produces.

The argument of this article so far has been that adequate pre-requisites have to be provided before society can justifiably blame the school when its products do not measure to societal expectations. However, in Zimbabwe, as Ndawi (1992) observes, the situation is that too many of the pre-requisites are not available, the expectations are not clear, and the measuring instruments are inadequate. The school therefore, would not be justifiably expected to be fully accountable for the products of the curriculum it implements.

#### The study

In view of the above background, the main purpose of the study was to solicit information on the accountability and obligation of the school as pertaining to society's expectation of the school in Zimbabwe. Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

- Who are the stake holders to whom the school should be accountable?
- What are the parents' expectations of the school?
- Who should take the blame when the school fails to meet its expectations?

The authors, working with a group of MEd students at the University of Zimbabwe, carried out the research study in Harare among the school teachers and the parent community.

#### Sample

The study was limited in scale due to time and financial constraints but sought to sample the views of teachers and other members of society who could be concerned about the school, with respect to the issues in

question. Twenty schools drawn from both the high- and low-density areas of Harare were used. The final sample comprised two broad categories; namely teachers ( $N = 462$ ) and non-teachers ( $N = 99$ ), making a total of 561 respondents. The teachers from each school were randomly selected, however, mostly purposive sampling was used to select the respondents from the community as accurate stratification would have been difficult. The non-teachers in the study were Government officials, pupils, parents, School Development Association Committee members, personnel from commerce and industry and members of the society in general; 256 of the teachers were also parents. All respondents were drawn from the city of Harare in Zimbabwe. In each school, the head or deputy, and one ordinary teacher, selected at random, were interviewed. Each research assistant was also required to interview one non-teacher respondent.

### Instruments

The relevant data for the study were collected using a questionnaire which consisted of two sections. Section A sought information on the personal characteristics of respondents. Section B consisted of five sub-sections, each with a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'not important' to 'very important' and 'not accountable' to 'very accountable'. The items were seeking information on parents' expectations of what the child should get from school and the extent to which the school should be accountable to the stakeholders. Two open-ended questions solicited suggestions from the respondents on how the school could meet societal expectations.

In order to solicit more qualitative information, presumably not tapped by the questionnaire, a 6-item semi-structured interview schedule was employed to generate more data. The schedule covered broad areas on the constraints experienced by the school in the areas of staffing resources, and interference from the Ministry of Education or the local community.

### Procedure

Six hundred copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the potential respondents along with a statement outlining the purpose of the study. Each of 20 students in the class was given 35 copies of the questionnaire to distribute at a specific school and its surrounding community. About 25 copies were to be completed by teachers, and the other ten by members of the community. This was to facilitate better returns for the class exercise to follow. (It was also realised that some of the teachers were themselves parents.) The questionnaires for the teachers were left at the school and collected after two weeks, whilst the other respondents (non-teachers) completed and returned the questionnaires to the students there and then. The interviews with the non-teachers were carried out immediately after completion of the questionnaire, whereas the heads and teachers were interviewed when the completed questionnaires were collected. This was done in order to avoid influencing the responses. This was a teaching exercise where other aspects of surveys were to be discussed with the students based on the exercise. Of the 600 questionnaires sent out, 561 were returned.

### Data analysis

The questionnaire yielded qualitative responses which needed to be aggregated in order to arrive at a common view expressed by the respondents on each item. It was therefore decided to quantify the responses in some systematic manner. Points were allocated to the responses on each item as: very important 5; important 4; neutral 3; unimportant 2; and very unimportant 1. (The same was done for "very accountable" – "very unaccountable" responses). The responses of all the respondents in each group (teachers/non-teachers) on each item were tallied to give a total score (T). This total score for the item was compared with a possible maximum (M) which would have been obtained if every respondent in that group (462 teachers or 99 non-teachers) had rated the item as "very important"/"very accountable" (5 points). The maximum points would be 2 310 and 495, respectively.

A percentage rating of the importance given to the item was then worked out as  $(M/T \times 100\%)$ . The items scoring higher percentages were considered to be viewed by the respondents as more important than those scoring lower percentages. The suggestions from the open-ended questions and the interview responses were considered together and the most popular views expressed deduced.

### Findings

Analysis of the data yielded some interesting findings on the research questions initially asked. The findings on each research question are presented below with the research questions indicated.

#### *Question 1: Who are the stakeholders to whom the school should be accountable?*

Table 1 shows that both teachers and non-teachers rated the School Development Association (SDA) as the most important stakeholder to whom the school should be accountable for its operations and outcomes. (The SDA is a committee of parents elected to run the affairs of the school on behalf of the parent community.) The teachers rated the pupils as the second most important stakeholders whilst non-teachers rated them third, after society in general.

**Table 1** Ratings of the need for school accountability towards various stakeholders

Stakeholders	Rating by teachers		Rating by non-teachers	
	Points out of 2 310	Importance %	Points out of 495	Importance %
Parents	1 815	78.6	363	73.3
Government	1 925	83.3	396	80.0
Pupils	1 991	86.2	401	81.0
SDA committee	2 013	87.1	409	82.6
Commerce and industry	1 617	70.1	341	75.8
Society in general	1 969	85.1	407	82.2

It is interesting to note that commerce and industry, as well as parents, were rated lowly as stakeholders to whom the school should be accountable. It had been expected that parents would be rated very highly as stakeholders to whom the school must be accountable.

#### *Question 2: What are the parents' expectations of the school?*

Although the parents (and indeed the society) are a heterogeneous group with a diversity of interests and expectations on the school, this study identified certain common expectations and asked the respondents to rate their importance. Table 2 shows the results.

**Table 2** Ratings of parents' expectations of the school by teachers and non-teachers

Parents' expectations	Rating by teachers		Rating by non-teachers	
	Points out of 2 310	Importance %	Points out of 495	Importance %
For pupil to obtain qualifications for good employment	2 255	97.6	456	92.1
For pupils to get knowledge of facts	1 793	77.6	385	77.8
For pupils to obtain skills	1 892	81.9	410	82.8
For pupils to learn good values and attitudes	1 694	73.3	371	74.9

The results show that both teachers and other members of society regarded the obtaining of qualifications to get good employment as the most important expectation of the parents of the school and both rated the mastery of skills as more important than the mastery of facts. Transmission of values was rated as the least important parental expectation of the school. The interviews yielded one possible explanation for this; which was that both groups felt that the parents saw it as their duty to inculcate their own values and attitudes into their children, and therefore did not expect the school to be accountable of the children left school without proper values and attitudes. For example, one catholic parent was reported as blaming school-based Scripture Union clubs for using untrained youths to guide the children in such a delicate area as religion. This, the parent alleged, was causing the sprouting of "numerous misguided congregations all over the country". Some parents are definitely particular about the religious/moral instruction of their children.

*Question 3: Who should take the blame when the school fails to meet its expectations?*

Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which the school should be accountable to the various stakeholders on each of the six identified areas of its activities. The parents were also asked to indicate their views on the same aspects. Results in Table 3 indicate that the teachers considered the biggest obligation of the school as facilitating the pupils' passing of the examinations. The parents were also of the same view. However, in the interviews, some parents blamed the schools for concentrating on the overall development of the child rather than on job acquisition skills. Both groups, however, showed that they expected the school to account, to some extent, for the behaviour of the pupils. The teachers and the parents also agreed on the view that the school was to a much lesser extent accountable for the rising rate of unemployment.

One suggestion given in response to the open-ended questions and the interview questions was that society was the organ that was most responsible for any poor behaviour and poor morals of the pupils because of the harsh economic environment it creates for most children. Most teachers and school heads felt that the school could do very little to ameliorate the situation. They also pointed out a number of factors that left the school unable to fully apply its potential in influencing the outcomes of the curriculum in Zimbabwe. The main factor was lack of finances which resulted in the schools failing to supply sufficient learning resources to widen and effectively implement the curriculum. In spite of this scenario, both teachers and non-teachers still felt that the area in which the school should be most accountable to the stakeholders was examination results.

## Discussion

The overall findings from this mini-study suggest that both the teachers and the parents agree that the school has to account to its stakeholders and to society in general for the outcomes of its activities. They also agree that the pupils' passing of the examinations and their acquisition of skills and knowledge are far more important for the school than the development of moral behaviour. This agreement on the mission of the school suggests that the two parties would agree on their evaluation of the successes and failures of the school. On the contrary, there has been much criticism of the school's ability to deliver the required product, especially by politicians at political rallies, in the daily press, and even over the radio (Daily News, 1 April 2002). What then is the problem?

### An historical perspective

At independence in 1980, the government of Zimbabwe opted to reconstruct the education system instead of continuing with colonial education. This option was in keeping with the objectives of the liberation struggle. Education was declared a human right and it aimed at increasing participation by the majority of Zimbabweans in the society's social and economic programmes through its relevance to the

**Table 3** Ratings of the school's area of accountability to stakeholders

Area of accountability to stakeholders	Rating by teachers		Rating by non-teachers	
	Points out of 2 310	Importance %	Points out of 495	Importance %
Student's behaviour	1 584	68.6	350	70.7
Examination results	1 914	82.9	307	82.2
Acquisition of job skills	1 595	69.0	374	75.6
The rising rate of unemployment	1 155	50.0	275	55.6
The increasing moral decay	1 397	60.5	330	66.7

economic demands of the country. However, as Berg (1993:470) observed "there is a tendency towards non-implementation of adopted programmes by governments of developing countries". Schools' efforts to produce products that match the world of work are, in most cases, constrained by the lack of prerequisites for proper implementation of rigorous and relevant curricula, designed to match economic and social development in society (Bockarie, 1992). These have been discussed above.

As a way of trying to understand why schools in Zimbabwe fail to produce suitable products for the world of work, it may be useful to consider the following questions:

- What does the Zimbabwe society need from the school?
- What does the school produce through its curriculum?

These questions may lead us to recommending solutions to the problem of the failure of the school to produce graduates suitable for the world of work. These questions apply equally to other developing countries, especially in Africa (Obanya, 1987).

### Zimbabwe's needs

Zimbabwe, like any other developing nation, aspires for an education system that prepares students for the world of work. The education system should be an investment in human capital. Zimbabwe should gradually move from an industrial-based economy to an information technology based economy, with the unskilled and semi-skilled labour decreasing. O'Neil (1986) argues that, for America, today's workplace demands very different skills from those of the 1950s workplace. This is also true of Zimbabwe. In response to such economic development, O'Neil observed that the North American education system, within the last decade, has focused on educational reforms linked to the imperatives of big business. Thus schools are taken as training/practising grounds for different sectors of the work force, providing knowledge and occupational skills necessary for expanding domestic production and foreign investment. Zimbabwe cannot ignore this trend.

Mandebvu (1996) investigated which attributes of school leavers were rated as important by employers in Zimbabwe. One hundred percent of the employers rated discipline, ability to follow instructions, and punctuality as important; 94.9% rated adaptability, ability to work in a team, problem-solving ability and oral communication skills as important. Only 67.5% of the employers did not expect the school to impart vocational skills. The present study showed that both the teachers and the parents did not consider the issues of discipline and behaviour as the most important for the school to impart. Such different expectations between the school and industry could result in the production of unemployable products by the school.

Nyagura and Reece (1990) observed the need for an education system that matches the socio-economic dictates of a developing Zimbabwe. They advocated an education system that provides opportunities for students to develop their potentials, learn and respond to new situations, and adapt to social change. Individuals produced through such an education system should be able to participate actively in the nation's political, social and cultural transformation. These educational products should also improve productivity of the nation in all areas of

economic activity. The education system should therefore have a curriculum that is reflective of the world of work.

### What Zimbabwe schools produce

The claim that the Zimbabwe curricula have been reconstructed, in line with the objectives of the liberation struggle, makes them no different from the curricula during the colonial era. The Zimbabwe typical mathematics, science or language curricula have not changed in practice though there is a clamour for a technically oriented curriculum (Zvobgo, 1999). If the curriculum is the socially constructed knowledge, as claimed by Young (1971), then it should reflect the culture and economic activities of the society it is designed for. The Zimbabwean school curriculum should therefore move away from its thrust towards developing intellectual capacity and transmission of culture (Ministry of Education, 1999), to one that combines intellectual and practical development.

Due to rapid technological development, the curriculum should be designed to do away with graduates who are functionally illiterate.

### Distracting factors

In a discussion with the group of students who were the research assistants for the study, a number of factors were identified as focusing the Zimbabwe school curriculum away from the demands of the world of work. The major ones are listed:

- The curriculum is too slow to respond to the demands coming from the world of work. Learners still read for enjoyment when industry requires the skills of reading for detail and understanding. Science lessons concentrate on reporting experiments when industry requires interpretation of machine manuals and scientific reports. Art and Craft syllabuses concentrate on drawing and basketry when industry requires skills in photography and editing.
- Schooling is examination-oriented, this resulting in no time being allocated to practical discovery by students. Knowledge gained through the education system is academic and, in most cases, after the examination the students remember almost nothing from what they have learnt. Education, in this case, is used as a means to an end, not an end in itself.
- There is a lack of financial backing to purchase equipment and material resources needed for the implementation of a curriculum that combines rigour and relevance. Rural schools, for example, lack qualified staff, textbooks, and furniture. How can they implement a practice-oriented curriculum relevant to the world of work?
- There is no link system between the curriculum developers for basic and tertiary education since the two are in different sectors with different policy planners. Education is treated in episodes with no link between the different levels though passing at one level facilitates entry to the next. Community and Non-governmental Organisations' (NGOs) efforts in the two sectors are isolated.
- The education system produces more than what the sectors of the economy can absorb, and worse still, the products do not have the skills required by industry. This leads to a high level of unemployment.

Development of man and his needs should be studied in connection with development of the means for fulfilling these needs, and with changes in his environment and the society to which he belongs. The education system is only able to produce and implement a rigorous and relevant curriculum if all the constraints given above are dealt with, leading to the production of a human resource suitable for the world of work.

Due to the problems encountered by schools in implementing a relevant curriculum, the product of the school has no future. For the rural school leaver, there is a break from the cultural development at home as he/she migrates from rural to urban centres in search of jobs and entry into technical colleges which are almost all urban-based.

Having acquired academic skills only, the school leaver may find it difficult to be self-employed, or worse still, to be employed by industry. Those students who do not do well in the examination system form the mobile unskilled and manual workforce who are not needed by the industry and commercial sectors.

### Recommendations

In line with the observations made in this paper, the authors propose that the following recommendations need to be considered if the education system of Zimbabwe (or any other developing country) is to produce an appropriate product for the world of work:

- Curriculum content should reflect the relevant technological demands of the time. Education policies should be continuously reviewed in relationship to the needs of the society.
- Technical reading and writing should be introduced in schools, especially in Maths and Science, instead of the ordinary comprehension presently emphasised in studying languages. According to O'Neil (1996), about 10 nation states practise these technical skills and these include Japan, Korea, China, Canada, England, Germany, Russia, Denmark, France, and the United States. Developing countries may be wise to follow their example as these are the skills industry requires.
- There is a need for industries and higher learning institutions to hold workshops for the purpose of exchanging ideas. Students from educational institutions should go on attachment so as to experience working in public, commercial and industrial environments to enhance their employability.
- Governments should have proper national manpower planning approaches, to identify areas of need in the economy as a basis for guiding curriculum planners. This may be done annually to establish the gaps in skills needed by current industry and bring the attention of the education system to the type of manpower needed by the industrial and commercial sectors.
- Governments should strive to equip schools more fully with the resources they need to produce products required by society, and thus meet the expectations of stakeholders.

### Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued that the school has to account to its stakeholders for its curriculum and the products it produces. It has been shown that there are serious inadequacies in the provision (to the schools) of the prerequisites for total accountability. It was concluded however that, in view of these inadequacies, the school can only be partially accountable for its activities and products. Both the teachers and the parents were found to agree on what aspects the school was supposed to be most accountable for, and what aspects were a lesser responsibility of the school. However, the aspects of discipline, behaviour, and co-operation which industry valued were given peripheral relevance by the school and the parents. The needs of a developing country like Zimbabwe were postulated and found to be different from what the school curriculum appeared to focus upon. This was seen as contributing to the products' irrelevance to the world of work.

The authors examined the factors that derail the school curriculum and made the above recommendations, which if followed could make the school curriculum more relevant to the needs of the society and the world of work. Fortunately, most of these recommendations do not call for finance, a commodity that has proved most illusive to developing countries.

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